



NEWS RELEASE

Arizona House of Representatives

1700 West Washington • Phoenix, Arizona • 85007-2844

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SPEAKER GOWAN AND REPRESENTATIVE THORPE INTRODUCE LEGISLATION TO EXAMINE REFUGEE PROGRAM

STATE CAPITOL, PHOENIX (Tuesday, February 9, 2016) – Speaker of the House David Gowan and Representative Bob Thorpe have today introduced similar legislation that not only examines the refugee process but also ensures the safety of every Arizona citizen.

Speaker Gowan's bill, HB 2691, will conduct an audit to accurately assess the number of refugees who have been resettled in the state and the amount of monies that have been spent on the refugee resettlement program.

The audit aims to search for facts and reliable data so the state can make well-informed decisions in the future regarding resettlement. Without a factual assessment of the current resettlement program, the state will not be able to make the best possible decision on behalf of the citizens of Arizona.

Speaker Gowan stated, "The time to act is now. We need to take seriously the concerns that have been raised nationally regarding this program. Arizona is a state that receives many refugees, we must ensure the identities and background of all persons in this program, regardless of country or region. My bill will ensure a timely and accurate audit on the resettlement program. Arizonans can know that each and every person relocated in their state have been properly vetted while also having accurate information on the program. This process will benefit the state and its citizens."

Representative Thorpe has introduced HB 2370, which will not allow non-citizens into the state of Arizona unless they have followed a certain set of background checks from the United States government.

HB 2370 articulates that the State of Arizona shall comply with the federal government and the placement of non-citizens into Arizona if the person has undergone a thorough criminal history, terrorism, and health background check. After thorough background checks the state will have final approval and the United States government shall reimburse the state for the costs of placing the persons into Arizona.

Additionally, Representative Thorpe proposed HB 2682 that sanctions inspections and licenses for refugee facilities. A refugee facility must be licensed by the state and the facility will be inspected monthly. Both measures establish credibility and safety for each facility in the state.

Rep. Thorpe said, "As the world around us becomes more volatile and situations more precarious, we must maintain Arizona's security and the protection of its people. These bills ensure persons coming to Arizona uphold Arizonan and United States law. Arizona is great because of its people, and we welcome those who wish to join our great state, but through a stable process and procedure."

~~###~~

MEDIA CONTACT:

Stephanie Grisham

Press Secretary

Arizona House of Representatives – Republican Caucus

sgrisham@azleg.gov

602.926.5518 (office)

480.707.7434 (cell)